THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840.]

"We should preach God's glory day by day, not by words only—often not by words at all—but by our conduct. If you wish your neighbors to see what God is like, let them see what He can make you like. Nothing is so infectious as example."—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

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APOSTASY AND RESTORATION.

THE significance and mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not properly appreciated by people generally. The question is frequently asked, "Why does your Church send missionaries into these countries, already so fully supplied with religious organizations, thus adding to the confusion that exists?" This question admits of a complete and satisfactory answer.

In the year 1820 A.D., the boy Joseph Smith was, like many to-day, confused and bewildered by the contentions and contradictions of modern Christianity. He despaired of receiving satisfaction from the opposing sects of the day, and decided to appeal to God for light regarding the salvation of his soul. Having read in the epistle of James that any man who lacked wisdom and desired knowledge might obtain the same by asking the Lord in faith (Jas. 1:5-6), he repaired to a wood near by his home and proceeded to pour forth his supplications to God, desiring to know which of all the churches then in existence was correct. Without going into detail, I will quote from the writings of Joseph Smith, in which he relates what transpired upon that memorable occasion, in answer to his prayers.

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. * * * When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—This is my beloved Son, hear him!" (Pearl of Great Price, page 85.) Joseph inquired of this personage which church he should join, and was told to unite with none of them,

for, said the Son, "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." Joseph was then told, the account continues, that he was chosen of God to usher in the dispensation of the fullness of times and to establish for the last time the Church of Christ upon the earth.

It is not my purpose to discuss the probability or correctness of the above account, further than to say that the boy had fulfilled the requirements of God, inasmuch as he had asked in faith, nothing wavering; consequently it may reasonably be assumed that he was heard by the Father.

By accepting this vision as a reality one is forced to conclude that the religious institutions of that day (1820) were but inefficient fragments of the true and perfect church of our Savior; that the church founded through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith contains the true plan of salvation, and consequently is responsible for the dissemination of the gospel to all the world. It will be profitable now to examine some evidence, scriptural and historical, relating to the question of a universal apostasy.

Many of the early prophets spoke emphatically of a great apostasy. Isaiah, beholding the future condition of the Church, exclaimed: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." (Isa. 24:5). Jeremiah mourns, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13); and further, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." (Jer. 16:19.) That this apostasy was to be universal is clear from the words of Amos, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12.) What an exact fulfillment of these prophecies is the religious confusion of the present day! Paul writing to Timothy describes the same events equally well. (II. Tim. 3:1-5.)

Christ organized and perfected His Church upon earth before His final ascension and left it thus complete under the personal direction of His chosen apostles. These faithful servants labored diligently in their various callings, but even in their lifetimes they beheld the beginning of that corruption of belief foretold by the ancient prophets. The cancer of apostasy having began its work of destruction, continued to eat its way into the pure doctrines of the Church, to the sorrow of the apostles. Paul wrote to the Galatian saints as follows: "I marvel that ye are so soon

removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1: 6), and to the Thessalonians, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." (II. Thess. 2: 7-12.) Both in Galatia and Thessalonica there were those who would pervert the gospel and the mystery of iniquity was at work. Speaking through John, the Lord said to the Church at Ephesus, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. 2: 4.) These passages show errors in part of the church; but Jude, writing "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," says: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 4.) It is plainly discernible from these statements that the entire church was to some extent tainted with false doctrine, shortly after the death of its Founder.

But the Apostles knew that the then healthy and perfect organization would gradually grow weaker, and finally die, as this apostasy gained a firmer hold upon its vitality. "And all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him." (Rev. 13: 3-4.) Also, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (II. Tim. 4: 3-4.) St. Paul, referring to Christ's second coming, says: "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (II. Thess. 2: 3-4.)

The scriptures not only foretell a great and universal falling away but set forth the exact causes. Note carefully the following quotations. "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24: 10-12.) "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (I. Tim. 4: 1.) Internal troubles were not alone responsible for this iniquity, for many grievous afflictions were brought upon the early Christians by the enemies of their faith, as these statements show: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of

the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." (Dan. 7:21-22.) "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John 16:2). "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." (Rev. 13:7.)

Three important facts are fully established by the foregoing citations: (1.) The prophets and apostles fully realized that there would be a great apostasy. (2.) It commenced in the days of the apostles and would subsequently consume the Church. (3.) The cause would be internal strife and dissension weakening the Church, so that it would be unable to withstand the persecution waged against it. Prominent and authoritative historians and ecclesiastics, recording the history of Christianity, give excellent proof that the two latter assertions are true and correct.

Converts joined the new church in thousands and the testimony of the apostles was accepted with great joy by those identifying themselves with the followers of the Nazarene. Witness the mighty manifestations upon the day of Pentecost, when three thousands souls "gladly received his (Peter's) word and were baptized." (Acts 2:41.) However the progress was not to be unhindered. The Jews, realizing that a universal acceptance of Christ would not only overthrow their religion, but also fasten upon them the sin of slaying the Messiah, brought their influence to bear against the Christians, that their destruction might be accomplished. They slew Stephen, murdered James the Just and the other James and imprisoned Peter. They tried to incense Rome against the Church and "In the same manner the most devout of their people were ready to denounce to the prefects and governors the pious followers of Jesus Christ as intriguers against the public peace." (Merivale, *History of Rome*, chap. 65.) The Romans, however, discredited these accusations and paid but slight attention to the complaints, but eventually, exasperated by the seditions of the Jews themselves, an army under Titus was sent to subjugate them. The Jews were defeated and Jerusalem with the holy temple destroyed. About this time, notwithstanding the excellence of their belief, dissensions began to appear amongst the Christians. Two heretical sects (the Gnostics and Ebionites) arose from their own ranks during the first and second centuries. "If we now examine these Gnostic and Judaizing theories we find that they agree in one capital respect, viz., in the rejection of the scripture doctrine of a real and true expiation of human guilt." (Shedd.) Thus in the first century heresy aroused contention in the very body of the Church.

One would naturally expect that the power of the Jews to injure them being materially lessened, the Christians would flourish unmolested under Roman protection. Such, however, was not the case. At frequent intervals throughout the second and third cen-

turies violent and bitter opposition was experienced by the Christians from Rome herself. It seems strange that the simple worship of the Christians should have aroused the forces of religious persecution at Rome, especially where the beliefs of all her conquered subjects "were allowed to flourish and where the freedom of the city was given to the gods of all nations."

The reasons given, as partial explanation for this fact, by Gibbons and Mosheim seem fair and reasonable. "Every Christian," says Gibbon, "rejected with contempt the superstitions of his family, his city, and his province. The whole body of Christians unanimously refused to hold any communion with the gods of Rome, of the empire, and of mankind." Naturally this attitude called forth the resentment of the surrounding peoples, whose traditions and ceremonies were sacred to them. Says Mosheim, "Another circumstance that irritated the Romans against the Christians, was the simplicity of their worship, which resembled in nothing the sacred rites of any other people. The Christians had neither sacrifices, nor temples, nor images, nor sacerdotal orders; and this was sufficient to bring upon them the reproaches of an ignorant multitude, who imagined that there could be no religion without these."

At first this persecution had no effect upon the Christians, but gradually their moral stamina weakened and the ceremonies of paganism were introduced into the Church to render it more popular and less liable to oppression. Dr. Mosheim says of the second century, "The Christian bishops multiplied sacred rites for the sake of rendering the Jews and pagans more friendly to them. * * * A large part, therefore, of the Christian observances and institutions, even in this century, had the aspect of pagan mysteries."

When Constantine ascended the throne of Rome in 323 A. D., the Christians were a most despised and troubled people, but upon his succession to power their condition experienced a complete and remarkable change for the better. The emperor, being himself converted to Christianity, raised it from the contempt of the populace to the state religion of Rome, and offered every inducement for the pagan world to join this now popular sect. At first it would appear that the troubles of the Church were over, but subsequent events prove that the sudden exaltation was disastrous to the preservation of primitive Christianity. Being suddenly raised to such popular prominence, after centuries of oppression, the Church was unable to adapt itself to the altered conditions, and what little resemblance it then had to the first church was almost entirely lost in the eager desire of conquest. Of this fourth century Mosheim relates: "The Christian bishops introduced with but slight alterations into the Christian worship, those rites or institutions by which formerly the Greeks and Romans and other nations had manifested their reverence towards their imaginary deities."

Concerning the spiritual gifts and graces, which Christ said should follow them that believe (Mark 16: 17-18), and which Paul explains as accompaniments of the Holy Ghost (I. Cor. 12), Rev. John Wesley has the following to say: "It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were common in the church for more than *two or three* centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the emperor Constantine called himself a Christian, and from a vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause thereby heaped riches and power and honor upon Christians in general, but in particular upon the Christian clergy. From this time they almost totally ceased, very few instances of the kind being found. The cause of this is not, as has been supposed, because there was no more occasion for them, because all the world was become Christians. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christians. The real cause of it was that the love of many, almost all Christians so-called, was waxed cold. The Christians had no more the Spirit of Christ than the other heathens. The Son of Man, when He came to examine His Church, could hardly find faith upon the earth. This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church—because the Christians were turned heathens again, and only had a dead form left." (John Wesley's Works, vol. vii, 89: 26-27.)

This evidence proves that so early as the fourth century the worship of Christians more resembled paganism than Christianity, and that the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost were missing from the Church. When the manifestations and signs accompanying the Holy Ghost are absent, we may readily know that the Holy Ghost himself is not with the church thus delinquent. Consequently, it is easily understood why the Christian Church was in so deplorable a state. Paul says that no man can actually know Jesus is the Christ save by the Holy Ghost. (I. Cor. 12: 3.) From Rev. 19: 10 we learn, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The spirit of prophecy is one of the signs of the Holy Ghost (I. Cor. 12: 10), therefore, a testimony of Jesus depended upon the inspiration of this Spirit. As the Spirit was missing amongst the Christians of Constantine's time, the Church of Christ was non-existent as well.

That conditions were not improved in later ages is seen by Mosheim's statement of affairs in the seventh century. "During this century true religion lay buried under a senseless mass of superstitions, and was unable to raise her head. The earlier Christians had worshipped only God and His Son, but those called Christians in this century worshipped the wood of a cross, the images of holy men, and bones of dubious origin."

That this treatise may not seem biased, let me quote you the opinion of "George of Saxony, a most bigoted papist, whom the

Roman Catholics always reckon among the most sincere and most active of the holy defenders of their religion." He thus expresses himself concerning "The corrupt state of the clergy and the abominable practices of the Roman See. * * * The scandalous conduct of the clergy is a very fruitful source of the destruction of poor souls. There must be a universal reformation; and this cannot be better effected than by a general council. It is, therefore, the most earnest wish of us all that such a measure be adopted." (Milner, *Ch. Hist.*, cent. 16, ch. 6, footnote.) This expresses the same sentiment as has been quoted from non-Catholics.

Having traced the departure thus far and having shown from scripture and history that it was both complete and universal, I will now pass over the remaining centuries until the present, merely remarking that no church until 1830 A.D. claimed a renewal of the Divine authority lost through the withdrawal of the Holy Ghost from the early Christian church. Many modern writers of repute admit the dissimilarity of modern religious systems compared with the Church established by our Lord. *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (page 163) explains, "We must not expect to see the church of holy scriptures actually existing in its perfection on the earth. It is not to be found thus perfect either in the collected fragments of Christendom, or still less in any one of those fragments." *Christianity Restored*, by Alex. Campbell, says on page 181, "Till that great and notable day of the Lord come we cannot, from the prophetic word, anticipate a universal return to the original gospel, or a general restoration of the kingdom of God in its primitive form."

I have now presented sufficient testimony to prove the stand taken by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that there has been a universal apostasy from primitive Christianity. The angel spoken of by John (Rev. 14: 6) came to earth and restored the gospel, with all its gifts and blessings. In 1830, through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and according to promises given by Christ, as recorded at the beginning of this article, the Church and kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth.

While the Latter-day Saints claim to have the real gospel of Jesus Christ, they do not hold up to ridicule or contempt the religious convictions of any man. They hold that all men are privileged to worship according to their desires, if their belief does not interfere with the religious freedom of others. They believe that all of the churches teach some truth and are practicing honestly the principles of morality they understand. With this platform of broad-minded toleration the Latter-day Saints send forth their missionaries into all accessible lands, not to force their doctrines upon any, but to cry repentance to all nations, and to give everyone the opportunity to investigate their claims.

Hull, England. SHIRLEY P. JONES.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1912.

EDITORIAL.

PRESENT DAY CONDITION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

THE following item was published in the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, February 6th, 1912, under the title, "Passing of Family Religion. Retired Colonel's English Impressions":

"Colonel H. T. S. Yates, Royal Artillery (retired), giving an account, at Southport, yesterday, of the Army Scripture Reader's Society, said the great bulk of the people in England to-day were absolutely indifferent to religion altogether, for work and amusement occupied the whole of their time, and religion, if it existed at all in their minds, was crammed out by the stress of life to-day. Family religion was passing from England—at all events, family prayer did not occupy the place in England to-day that it did when he was young."

This, if true, and there are many evidences corroborative of the statement, is a sad commentary on the religious movement of the present day. When prayer is neglected in the family circle, and the spirit of worship departs from the home, a condition of spiritual darkness, fatal to the welfare of the soul, naturally follows. Jesus, the Christ, strongly emphasized the principle of prayer. He was the great Exemplar. It is recorded of Him that He often withdrew from the presence of His followers that He might alone lift up His heart in prayer and praise to the Father, and by faith, through prayer, secure the spiritual strength necessary to carry Him safely through the fiery ordeals of life. His instructions upon this important subject were direct and explicit. The Lord's prayer, given by the Master to His disciples as a guide to the throne of grace, for simplicity of language, for depth of sentiment, for its far reaching, all embracing and comprehensive character, cannot be surpassed in the literature of the Bible. The solemn injunction of the Savior, when taken in connection with the vital words of this Divine invocation, clearly shows how impossible it is to please God and win His favor without prayer.

The disciples of the meek and lowly Nazarene were taught to pray not only for one another of the household of faith, but also for their enemies, and it was said unto them, "all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22.) The best and choicest gifts of life are contingent upon the

prayer of faith. When prayer dies out of the heart, religion dies out of the home.

It may be true, as Colonel Yates states, that work and amusements occupy the whole of the people's time, cramming religion out of their minds, but the query naturally arises, "What has brought about this unfortunate condition of the Christian Church?" Is it because of an inordinate love of work and amusements on the part of the people, or is it due to some defect in religious standards? The gospel, as taught by the Savior, was invariably accompanied by a spirit and power that aroused the great majority of believers to acts of self-sacrifice, devotion and religious fervor which have justly won the admiration of succeeding ages. Nothing apparently was regarded of sufficient importance to take precedence over their love of God and loyalty to His cause. Their worship was simple but consistent. They were meek and lowly—humble, prayerful. Persecution sometimes raged with fierceness, but they met it bravely. They were frequently misrepresented and reviled, but they did not revile again. So great was their faith, so pure their lives, so sincere their love of the truth, that death, though it often came in violent form, had no terror for them. Such a religion, in the powerful influence which it exerts over the human mind, is far above and beyond all earthly considerations—yes, even beyond the love of work, which was ordained of God for man and is honorable in all, and the love of amusements, which have their proper place in the economy of life, and are essential to the well-being of every son and daughter of Adam.

In early Christian times it was entirely unnecessary to introduce a vaudeville performance into the religious service to attract attention, amuse and thereby secure increased attendance at church, as is sometimes done in these latter days. For example, witness the incident that took place in the Methodist Church of Hillsdale, New Jersey, U. S. A., published in the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* of February 6th, 1912, as follows:

"The New York correspondent of the *Morning Leader* says:—A piece of sparkling news comes from the Methodist Church at Hillsdale, New Jersey, whose pastor, the Rev. William Hurd, is choirmaster as well as preacher. Just before the sermon last night, at a given signal, twelve boys rose in the front pew and marched into the spacious platform pulpit to the harmonium accompaniment of 'Onward, Christian soldiers!' Standing in a row, they proceeded to shout in unison 'Say, my friend, have you seen Second Timothy, chapter 2, verse 15, and First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 22? They tell you exactly what to do.'

"Before the congregation had quite recovered from this evangelical novelty the boys whistled in chorus two hymns, 'Stand up, stand up, for Jesus' and 'Wonderful words of life.'

"Mr. Hurd explained that this was all part of a new method of getting an increased attendance at the church."

The present condition of the religious world in Great Britain, America and in European countries generally, suggests the fulfillment of a prediction by the Prophet Amos, who if he were living to-day could not state the case more clearly. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." (Amos 8: 11-12.)

It would appear from this, and also from the word of the Lord given to Isaiah 24: 1-6, that the inhabitants of the earth have departed from the way of the Lord, having "transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant." They are therefore without the light of truth to guide them aright and are bereft of the true spirit of worship. The churches of the land are comparatively empty, because man-made doctrines in present-day religions do not and cannot exert sufficient influence to draw the people there, while at the same time the spirit of prayer and worship has gone out of the home. This is a severe indictment against modern Christianity, but it is voiced not only by Colonel Yates, but by many intelligent, observing and thoughtful people.

Where is to be found the remedy for these untoward conditions? We confidently point to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which offers mankind the restored gospel of the Redeemer; a gospel that bears the seal of Divine authority; a gospel that proclaims the necessity of apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts, healings, helps, governments and diversities of tongues, emphasizing the importance and absolute need of present-day revelation; a gospel that teaches the four great cardinal doctrines of redemption, namely: Faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, which are one God in mind and purpose, but separate and distinct in personality; repentance of sin; baptism by immersion, by one having authority, for the remission of sin, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

An acceptance of this plan, as proclaimed by the Latter-day Saints, would surely work a marvelous change in the Christian world. The horrors of war would cease. Enmity one towards another would be extinguished in the hearts of men. Skepticism and doubt would pass away. The fruits of a pure faith, such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering and gentleness, would adorn the character and embellish the life of every worshipper of the living and true God. One could then safely look without fear of disappointment for well-filled churches and an earnest and devout spirit of prayer in the homes of the people.

RUDGER CLAWSON.

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS.

"MAN still insults the Giver of all his good by fumbling forms of faith and worship suited only to barbaric minds in a state of embryo!" Thus writes Marie Corelli, in the January number of *Nash's Magazine.*

There are many voices in the wilderness to-day telling us of the deplorable level to which so-called Christianity has fallen. Some tell us that the church's doctrines have become as old coin, and that if she cannot "coin afresh as the currency wears out the clergy are no better than doctrinal bankrupts." Also, "that unless she (the Church of England) freely restates and remodels her creeds so as to meet the requirements of the age, she will be left stranded on the shores of time, while the tide of this modern life will leave her even further and further behind—a sad warning of the inevitable results of an iron-bound system of worn-out dogmas and lifeless traditions!" (Rev. H. Mayne Young, in Westminster Abbey.)

Another voice that cries from the darkness writes thus, in the *Religion of Geology*: "How ingenious and persevering men are in deluding themselves on the subject of religion! Since the time of Christ what countless devices have they framed to escape from the lofty truths and spiritual piety of His gospel! Nor are they satisfied with this, for every science is ransacked for facts to neutralize all religion. Men's consciences will not permit them to throw off all forms of religion, and therefore they are satisfied if they can only tear out the heart. They like to preserve and embalm the external covering, as the naturalist does the skin of an animal for his cabinet, and as the latter fills his specimen with straw and arsenic, and fits glass eyes into it, so do men fill up their religious specimen with error and vain speculation, fit into its head the eyes of false philosophy, and then claim for it intellectual worship." (Rev. Dr. Hitchcock.)

What do all these voices proclaim? Could the effects of the great apostacy be declared in stronger terms? Do not such words as quoted above proclaim to the world that there has been a universal turning away from the gospel of Christ as it was taught in primitive times? No one will dare to say that Christ's teachings were lifeless traditions, worn-out dogmas and false philosophy. Believe me, all such things have their source in man. After all, these voices are but fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah wherein he says: "The gentiles shall come unto thee [God] from the ends of the earth, and shall say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." More than twenty-five hundred years ago the Prophet Isaiah told of the sad and lamentable conditions that would obtain in the latter days. He speaks thus: "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with

strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. * * * Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. 29: 9-14.)

Even in the prevailing condition of the religious world to-day, one can readily discern that is but a step toward the higher and the truer. Religious indifference is the most difficult thing the servants of God have to contend with. People care little for and think less about the contending sects of modern Christendom. Pleasure, next to the necessity of earning a livelihood, is the great pursuit of countless millions. How often we are told, both in word and action: "Money and pleasure are the supreme things!" These we know cannot be found in sermons, cold formal services, nor in the contemplation of spiritual matters. The prevailing apathy needs to be disturbed and interest awakened, if only at present in the way of dissatisfaction with that which is already possessed, and then there is immediate hope of greater success in the promulgation and acceptance of the truth which God has revealed from heaven in this day and age of the world.

One has only to reflect on the above quotations to discern the contrast between the lifeless traditions, worn-out dogmas and false philosophy of men and the true gospel and Church of Christ, with its inspired priesthood and spiritual gifts and blessings. The contrast is so great and startling that an intelligent comparison has only to be made to convince the honest in heart of the divinity of the restored gospel. Every ray of light, that shows up the fallacy of man-made religions, aids in creating a desire to know the truth, and counts in the sum of effects that will bring about the salvation and exaltation of humanity.

It is to be regretted that it is so necessary to make continual reference to the evidences of the universal apostasy and the dead forms of sectarianism, which are all so plain to the Latter-day Saints, but so unpleasant for their votaries to hear about. It is a more pleasing duty to expound the gospel that is "the power of God unto salvation"—to point out to man the exaltation he may reach through faith and obedience—and to point to the unity and strength of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The light of truth naturally exposes error, and tends to accomplish the purposes of God—the salvation and exaltation of His children.

Norwich, England. J. LESLIE BROADBENT.

THE POWER OF CHARACTER.

THE desecrators were driven from the temple of God not so much by the scourge as by the gleam of character that flashed from the eye, which was the index of a righteous soul. The Roman soldiers could not lay hold upon Christ. Without character the strongest are weak, with it the weakest are strong.

The credentials of Christianity are the characters of those who have been transformed by her power. Unless the representatives of Christianity exemplify her transforming power in their own lives they will be impotent in power.

Washington, dignified and ennobled by a spotless character, was loved and trusted never more than in the dark hour of defeat. Napoleon, unsurpassed in brilliant generalship, was feared and distrusted never more than in the hour of victory.

If when brilliant accomplishments fail, character is thus authoritative in the secular realm, it is criminal not to realize that the power of Christian manhood depends not so much upon intellectual genius and brilliant attainments as upon the conformity of life to that Pattern which is the ideal that will ultimately transform the world.

The truest eloquence is the eloquence of noble character. When the casket containing the great manly figure of Phillips Brooks, one of the simplest and yet one of the greatest of men, lay upon the catafalque in front of Trinity Church in Boston there stood before it a vast multitude mourning for the one they had loved and lost. Every head was bared and bowed. They sent up to heaven a silent, loving tribute to that character as guileless as a child. Those lips upon whose eloquence thousands of hungry hearts had feasted were cold in death, but that character—so true, so pure, so transparent, so childlike—was eloquent with an eloquence which words could not contain.

To have Christ's character is to have Christ's power over men. If we would lift others up we ourselves must be upon higher ground. Sometimes we can not wonder that the keen eyed, skeptical world is not convinced. Authority inheres not in the sacred cloth of pious cant, not in sacerdotal office, not in ecclesiastical relations. Authority inheres in fidelity to God, in fidelity to truth, in fidelity to self. This authority, this power man can not give, can not take away.

The law that action and reaction are equal is true in morals as in physics. Every word, every deed, every thought, every feeling selects, shapes, polishes, or fixes a stone in the imperishable monument of character. That which is a monarch without becomes a despot within. Conduct is the expression of the inner self. Whatever may be psychologically possible, practically our choices represent our character as they determine our activity. We are free to mold character, but we are not free to live con-

trary to character. How fearful the thought that man can become the slave of a character which leads to sin! How blessed the thought that we can build a character which will make us subjectively pure and objectively powerful!—*New York Herald.*

PARABLE OF THE TOBACCO SEED.

THEN shall the kingdom of Satan be likened to a grain of tobacco seed, which, though exceedingly small, being cast into the ground, grew, and became a great plant, and spread its leaves rank and broad so that huge and vile worms formed a habitation thereon. And it came to pass, in the course of time, that the sons of man looked upon it, and thought it beautiful to look upon, and much to be desired to make lads look big and manly. So they put forth their hands and did chew thereof. And some it made sick and others to vomit most filthily. And it further came to pass that those who chewed it became weak and unmanly, and said, "We are enslaved, and can not cease from chewing it."

And the mouths of all that were enslaved became foul, and they were seized with violent spitting, and they did spit, even in the ladies' parlors and in the house of the Lord. And the saints of the Most High were greatly plagued thereby. And in the course of time it came also to pass that others snuffed it, and they were taken suddenly with fits, and they did sneeze with a great and mighty sneeze, insomuch that their eyes were filled with tears, and they did look exceedingly silly.

And others cunningly wrought the leaves into rolls, and did set fire to one end thereof, and did suck vehemently at the other end thereof and did look very grave and calf-like; and the smoke of their torment ascended up like a fog.

And the cultivation thereof became a great and mighty business in the earth; and the merchants waxed rich by the commerce thereof. And it came to pass that some of the professed saints of the Most High defiled themselves therewith, even the poor, who could not buy shoes, nor bread, nor books for their little ones, spent their money for it. And the Lord was greatly displeased therewith.

But with one accord they exclaimed, "We can not cease from chewing, snuffing and puffing!" Oh, ye professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, will ye be the slaves of a nasty, poisonous weed?

One is your Master, even Christ.—SELECTED.

NEVER did any soul do good but it became readier to do the same again with more enjoyment. Never was love, or gratitude, or bounty practised but with increasing joy, which made the practiser still more in love with the fair act.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

Sunday School Anniversary.—Sunday, January 28th, 1912, being the eleventh anniversary of the Middlesbro' branch Sunday School (Newcastle conference), was duly commemorated by a fitting program, given by the members of the school. There was a large attendance, and all seemed to enjoy the exercises very much. On the following Wednesday the Sunday School gave a "tea" party, at which a fine program was given, which included an interesting sketch. We were favored with the presence of Elder George B. Chambers, who was formerly presiding elder in this branch. His remarks were encouraging and instructive.

District Meeting.—An instructive and successful district meeting was held in the Leicester branch (Nottingham conference), on Sunday, February 11th, 1912. President Thomas S. Wheatley, Elders Thomas F. Hardy and Milton H. Love were present, together with branch elders L. M. Brown and Thomas E. Winegar. Two meetings were held, commencing at 2:30 and 6:30 p.m. President Wheatley and Elder Hardy gave timely instructions to the saints and friends at the afternoon session. The evening meeting was especially well attended. The general and local authorities were presented by President Wheatley, after which Elder Love gave an able discourse on the gospel, and exhorted all to be obedient to its teachings. Elder Hardy followed with some impressive remarks. Showed the necessity for the restoration of the gospel. The choir very beautifully rendered the anthem, "Hark! Hark! My Soul," and is to be commended for its splendid work. All present had an enjoyable time and felt well repaid for having attended.

Successful Socials.—A successful social was held on Wednesday, January 31st, 1912, in the York branch (Hull conference), in honor of the primary class of the Sunday School. Much credit is due Sister Lily Stainton, teacher of the class, for the success of the social.

On January 26th, 1912, a social was held in the Blyth branch (Newcastle conference), the purpose being to encourage the Sunday school children and bring into closer relationship the saints and investigators. A large number of saints and friends turned out. A good program was rendered, which included some interesting games. All present expressed themselves as having had a delightful time. As a social event, the evening was a decided success.

On Saturday evening, February 10th, 1912, the saints of the Preston branch (Liverpool conference) held a successful social in their meeting room. There was a good attendance of the saints and friends. A number of the conference elders, who met here for their monthly Priesthood meeting the afternoon of the same

day, were also present. A very interesting program was rendered, after which games were participated in. All present had a most enjoyable time. Fruit was served during the evening.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR THEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

LESSON XXVII.—WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

General reference: Luke 10:25-37.

I. JESUS AND THE LAWYER.

1. The lawyer's question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Compare question asked of Jesus by the rich young man (Matt. 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18; also the question, likewise by a lawyer, as to the great commandment (Matt. 22:36-40).
2. Jesus replies with counter questions.
3. The lawyer attempts to justify himself. (a) The attempt indicates self-conviction. (b) It prompts a second question: "Who is my neighbor?" This inquiry implies limitation of the law as to its application; compare Peter's inquiry as to how many times he was required to forgive (Matt. 18:21, 22: see lesson 22).

II. THE LESSON PRESENTED IN PARABLE—THE GOOD SAMARITAN (Luke 10:30-35).

1. The victim of robbers despoiled and wounded.
2. Both priest and Levite withhold assistance.
3. Aid from one of the despised Samaritan people.
4. The lesson applied (verses 36, 37).
5. "Then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise."

Note: In connection with the study of the parable of the Good Samaritan that of the unmerciful servant may well be reviewed (Matt. 18:23-35; see lesson 22).

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